



Performance Audit Follow-Up: Pregnant Inmates and Their Dependent Children

*Prepared for the Committee on Legislative Research
by the Oversight Division*

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December 1994

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December, 1994

Members of the Committee on Legislative Research:

As required by statute, we have concluded our follow-up review of the October 20, 1993 audit report issued on the Department of Corrections, Pregnant Inmates and their Dependent Children. One year after the completion of a management or program audit, the Oversight Division is required to review the operations of the agency audited to determine whether or not there has been substantial compliance with the recommendations contained in the report.

We are pleased to report that two recommendations are fully implemented, and that the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health have made progress in implementing the remaining two recommendations.

The accompanying report includes the original audit recommendations and our comments regarding their status.

Jeanne Jarrett, CPA
Director

Background

The Oversight Division of the Joint Committee on Legislative Research was directed by Committee resolution in May of 1992, to conduct a limited scope performance audit of the Department of Corrections; with special emphasis on pregnant women incarcerated in Missouri prisons. A report detailing this limited scope performance audit was issued on October 20, 1993. Audit work and research was conducted in the following areas during this audit:

- Intake and Classification
- Inmate Work Programs
- Education Programs
- Environment and Hygiene
- Nutritional Requirements
- Recreation and Exercise
- Mental Health Services
- Medical and Health Services
- Incarcerated Parent/Child Relations

The Department of Corrections, as outlined under Chapter 217, RSMo, is charged with the supervision and management of all penal, correctional, training, rehabilitation, and reformatory institutions; as well as all probation and parole within the State of Missouri. There are two Department of Corrections facilities which are dedicated to the incarceration and rehabilitation of female inmates: Renz Correctional Center and Chillicothe Correctional Center. Data and statistics from these two Correctional Centers comprised the majority of the information provided in this performance audit.

The Joint Committee on Legislative Research requested a limited scope audit concerning pregnant women in Missouri prisons and their dependent children, because there is a growing number of women incarcerated every year with a record number of women in state and federal prisons. More than three-fourths of the women in prison are young single mothers with dependent children at home; and these women are often undereducated, unskilled, unemployed, and poor. It is estimated that ten percent of women in prison are pregnant, and experts agree it is important for babies to develop a close attachment to their caretaker early; to ensure emotional, mental and even physical health. For some women who come to prison pregnant or with small dependent children at home, the stress on them and their children can be fatal.

Authority, Purpose, and Scope

This Follow-up audit was conducted under the authority of Section 23.190 RSMo, which requires that one year after the completion of each audit the Oversight Division shall review the operations of the agency audited to determine whether or not there has been substantial compliance with the recommendations contained in the audit report. This follow-up was conducted according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Audit testing was limited in the follow-up, and mainly consisted of conducting interviews and some limited sampling. With respect to items not tested, nothing came to our attention that would cause us to believe that the state is not in compliance with any applicable laws, regulations, contracts or grants. Original audit work was not conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, and was not relied upon during this follow-up.

The purpose of this report is to present our conclusions about the Department of Corrections and Department of Health's progress in implementing recommendations from the October 1993 limited scope performance audit. The report detailing that limited scope performance audit contained four recommended changes.

Implementation Status of the Audit Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION #1:	That the Department of Corrections study access to vocational education programs for all women inmates, and consider reinstating vocational education programs at all institutions that house women inmates.
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This recommendation has been fully implemented. The Department of Corrections is using established procedures for female inmates to apply for vocational education training, and is processing these applications in a timely manner. Chillicothe Correctional Center currently offers four different vocational training courses; and Renz currently offers one, with a Computer Programming course to be offered at a future date. Women inmates at both Renz and Chillicothe Corrections Centers can apply for vocational training programs offered to female inmates; and if applicable the inmate is transferred to the facility conducting the desired training.

RECOMMENDATION # 2: **That the Department of Health conduct inspections of food service operations at all Correctional Centers on an annual basis.**

This recommendation has been partially implemented. While conducting follow-up audit work it was discovered that Oversight did not request a response from the Department of Health (DOH) to the audit report dated October 20, 1993; and therefore DOH did not respond to this recommendation in that report.

Section 217.100 RSMo grants the Director of the Department of Corrections the authority to enter into agreements with other state departments or agencies to provide services to the department. An interagency agreement between the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health was signed and executed on January 22, 1986. This agreement is automatically renewed annually, unless revoked in writing with 60 days notice by either party. There was no evidence that this agreement had been revoked by either party. In this agreement, the Department of Health is to provide on-site environmental health services at least annually to each Department of Corrections facility, and a narrative report of the results of that inspection.

At the request of the Superintendent of Renz Correctional Center, the Department of Health conducted a food service inspection of their facilities on November 11, 1993. However, the Chillicothe Correctional Center has not had a food service inspection since May 16, 1990. The Department of Health stated that they have no set pattern for their food service inspections of state facilities, and have no immediate plans to conduct inspections of any other food service facilities operated by the Department of Corrections unless requested.

RECOMMENDATION # 3: **That the Department of Corrections establish a formal drug and alcohol abuse treatment program for female incarcerates, and staff it with certified drug and alcohol abuse counselors.**

This recommendation has been partially implemented. The Department of Corrections has not established a written department-wide standard policy for the treatment of drug and alcohol abuse for incarcerates. It is the responsibility of each Correctional Center to develop their own policy. Until

June 30, 1994 the Department was contracting with Correctional Medical Systems to provide referral, and treatment of inmates with drug and alcohol abuse problems. The Department of Corrections took over control of the program after that date, because it was felt they could provide a program more in line with their department's mission. Effective October 1, 1994 the Department of Corrections received a grant from the United States Department of Justice to establish a program of identifying and treating drug and alcohol abuse in state correctional facilities. With this grant the Department of Corrections is planning to develop a department-wide policy on drug and alcohol abuse treatment for incarcerated inmates.

The grant money mentioned above would also be used to fund a substance abuse counselor at each Correctional facility throughout the state. Of the two female correctional facilities; Renz Correctional Center currently has a counselor, but Chillicothe Correctional Center does not. At this time the counselor position at Chillicothe is in the process of being filled, since the federal grant is now funding the position. Chillicothe had been without a counselor since the expiration of the Correctional Medical Systems contract on June 30, 1994.

RECOMMENDATION # 4:

That the Department of Corrections ensure all information concerning the delivery of medical care and the condition of the pregnant inmate, be included in that inmate's official medical record.

This recommendation has been fully implemented. The Department of Corrections is currently contracting with Correctional Medical Systems to provide for the medical care of inmates. With the exception of one test that was not conducted as required, we found the recordkeeping in our sample of records reviewed to be adequate and all necessary items properly documented. Correctional Medical Systems has also applied for accreditation to the National Commission on Corrections Health Care, and is currently waiting for that commission to conduct on-site inspections of their operations.

The Department of Corrections has also instituted internal checks on Correctional Medical Systems, to ensure they deliver the proper level of medical care to inmates. Each institution is scheduled to have at least one planned and one unplanned review during the year, that is to be conducted by personnel from the Department of Corrections central office. Follow-ups

are done if problems are noted during these reviews, or if there are a large number of grievances received from that institution. In addition, each facility has a monthly medical audit meeting with representatives from both the Department of Corrections and Correctional Medical Systems. A monthly statistical report is presented at this meeting by Correctional Medical Systems and discussed; along with any other items that either party feel require attention.